

How to Plan a Community Walk for Public Health Week

In celebration of National Public Health Week this year, we are promoting the idea of a community walk. Community walks are a great way to promote public health in your community and draw attention to the many different parts of your organization.

This year, the American Public Health Association's theme for National Public Health Week is "Empowering Americans to Live Stronger, Longer!" Visit <http://www.apha.org/nphw/05-letter.htm> for more information on what the American Public Health Association has planned to celebrate Public Health Week on a national level. A community walk can easily tie into this theme, and can also highlight your organization's particular areas of focus and promote the three legs of the PHIP identity platform of:

- *Essential programs for improving health*
- *Information that works*
- *Protecting you and your family every day*

Your walk can be large or small, can be for awareness raising about public health, or a fundraiser for a specific project. Most importantly, remember that no matter how big your event is, the goal is to promote the Public Health brand, and to talk about all the good things your organization is doing for the community. No matter the size or the scope, your event is helping raise awareness about public health in your community!

There are many tools, including an event checklist, media release examples and sample letters in Appendix A of this event guide that will help in planning a walk in your community as well as many additional tools on the PHIP website at <http://ww2.doh.wa.gov/phip/> including templates for tee-shirts, banners, hats and other items if the scope of your event includes these items. In addition, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- If you plan your walk on a weekday, noon is a great time to have it. Many people walk on their lunch break, and you can work with local businesses to promote the walk to their employees.
 - Also remember to invite the public health workforce, community partners, elected officials, members of the general public, etc. The more people you inform about your walk, the more successful it will be.

- Depending on the scope of your walk, a registration table may or may not be needed. Think about how formal you would like your walk to be. If you want to have giveaway items for the walk (tee-shirt, etc.) a registration table is a good idea; if you are just promoting an informal walk in the community, registration might not be necessary.
 - Remember, templates for tee-shirts, banners, hats and other items are available on the PHIP website at <http://ww2.doh.wa.gov/phip/> for you to use.
- Think about the weather in your area when planning the walk. If your community is prone to poor weather in early April, have an alternate location for the walk. Local malls, schools and other large community buildings might be willing to house your walk. All you have to do is ask!
- Having speakers at your walk is an easy and cost effective way to increase the visibility of your walk. Having one or two VIP speakers at the beginning and/or end of your event provides a great reason for the media to come to your event, as well as creating a schedule that helps frame your event. The Mayor is a logical person to ask, as are members of your City Council, members of the Board of Health, administration from your organization, school officials and members of your police and fire departments' administration. In addition to speaking opportunities for VIPs, remember to invite them to participate in the walk as well.